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THE CHRISTMAS
OF THE
NINTENDO
MARIO * ZELDA 1988
+ MORE GAMES 1988



The 1983 video-game crash had put retailers off of game consoles so much that when Nintendo decided to market their Japanese Family Computer (Famicom) in North America, there were few takers.

Despite Nintendo's VCR-like design and innocuous "Entertainment System" name, many retailers still didn't like the idea of returning to the video-game business. It took bundling the system with a light-gun, and the (brief) introduction of a robot to convince Toys R Us (in particular) to stock it. Even then, sales were slow.

Consumers had flocked to home computers in the wake of the video-game crash and required some persuasion to invest once again in a console. Inevitably, like with almost anything, it came down to a matter of price -- once the NES fell below the \$100 mark, they sold like hotcakes, making Christmas 1988 the "Christmas of the Nintendo".

Looking for a child-friendly light-gun game and having a desire to stay away from the sci-fi genre, Nintendo hit on Duck Hunt. A popular American past-time, Duck Hunt appealed to a large segment of the US population.



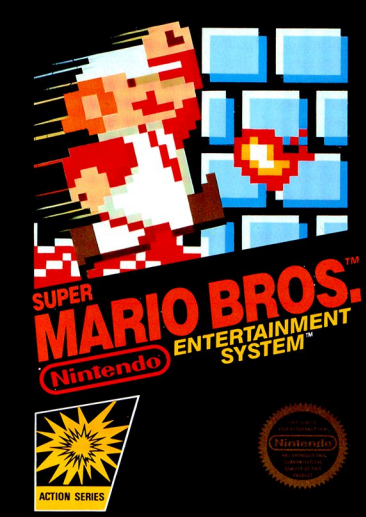
It wasn't just consoles retailers were leery to stock -- it was also the games. The large variety of sub-par games released in 1982 had led to retailers holding the bag as manufacturers began to go bankrupt, and they weren't enthusiastic about going another round.

Nintendo's solution was to introduce a system into the NES that only allowed "authorized" cartridges to work in the system. Third-party developers would need Nintendo's approval for their game to work. This way, retailer could be confident customers weren't going to return large numbers of cartridges; however, this also meant Nintendo could refuse to license games that competed too closely with their own titles, and would refuse to license games that weren't suitable for all ages -- a critical part of Nintendo's marketing strategy.

Further, to stifle competition from other console manufacturers, Nintendo insisted game developers release their games exclusively on the NES for a period of two years.

This policy would help Nintendo to hold 90% of the home console market by the end of 1988.

Capcom's Mega Man would kickstart a franchise that would grow to over 50 games on multiple systems. Mega Man is a robot that must save the world from an evil assistant of his creator.



Nintendo's decision to bundle Super Mario Brothers in with the NES played no small part in its success. SMB showcased the console's hardware capabilities in many ways, taking advantage of the NES's system of tiles and blocks, ability to draw graphics offscreen and scroll them into view, and independent sprites.

These features were quite advanced and not available in most competing systems and home computers at the time, and made games on these other systems feel quite dated. This, combined with Nintendo's exclusivity arrangements, would decimate the home computer software market by the end of 1988, with only popular arcade conversions and "triple-A" titles remaining profitable.

The days of the lone computer programmer selling games through magazines were over -- at least until the early days of smartphone app-stores provided a new market for solo game developers-turned-entrepreneurs.

The video-game cowboys would ride again, then -- at least until the market was dominated by games with big budgets once more.

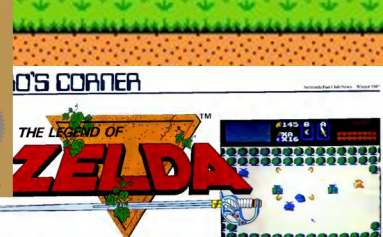
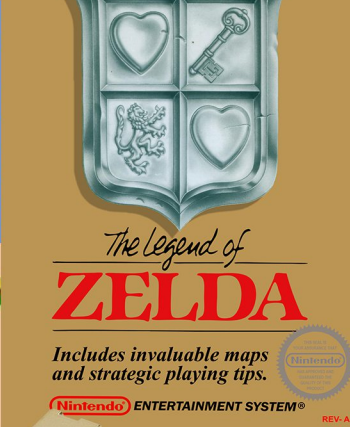
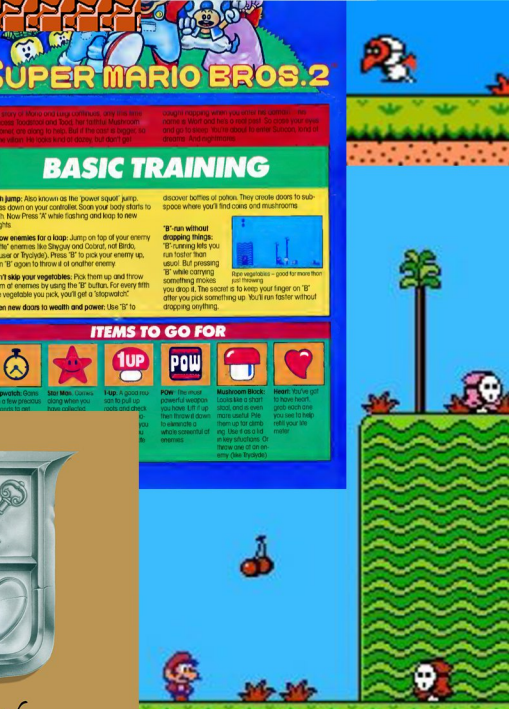
Top-down RPGs were nothing new, but Nintendo put its unique spin on the genre in The Legend of Zelda, mixing puzzles, action, battles and exploration to create a dynamic game that kept players interested. It also included gameplay areas that were not necessary for the game's completion -- a novel idea in a time of limited memory storage. In 1988, Zelda sold over two million copies.

Mario and Luigi first appeared in Nintendo's arcade games Donkey Kong and Mario Bros., but it would take going "Super" to truly make them household names. A side-scrolling platform game,

Super Mario Brothers has Mario and Luigi travel the Mushroom Kingdom in a quest to rescue Princess Toadstool from the evil Bowser.



It would sell over 40 million copies. Mama Mia!





AFTER BURNER

Aerobics, ever the contradictions have gone and done what every body else said they couldn't. They've gone and converted the unconvertible back into 87 people of all descriptions have raved on about it's turbo graphics, livable sit down hydraulic cabinet. Activision's produced the cheese book better than Terry Venables and scratched the licence narrowly beating their closest rivals to cries of "it can't be done!" and "Remember Out Run!"

You fly an F-14 fighter plane through 23 levels of fast frantic aerial combat, with a little bit of ground strafing thrown in for good measure. As this is done

64 Screen Scene

He's too close for lock.

Just far too easy. The secret to completing Afterburner is to keep moving a little to the right, and then a little to the left. The only real problem is that you need to be behind the enemy, but a quick barrel roll will sort them out.

Afterburner is a reasonable attempt at converting the unconvertible, but then that's the case of many games. Technically it's not a bad game, but for the public it's a disappointment. The real problem with Afterburner is that it's not a game. It's a simulation. It's a simulation of a jet fighter, and it's a simulation of a jet fighter. It's a simulation of a jet fighter, and it's a simulation of a jet fighter.

Tony Dillon

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Tony Dillon

Price: £9.99 cass £12.99 disk

Afterburner

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Tony Dillon

70%

SOUND GRAPHICS LASTABILITY 61% PLAYABILITY 72%

Activision

After Burner's sit-down arcade cabinet tilted vertically while the seat tilted horizontally, creating an immersive experience that made the game quite popular. You needed to wear a seatbelt, otherwise it was possible to get thrown out! After Burner's availability on Sega's Master System console was one of the few reasons gamers chose it over the NES.

"Let's blow some crap up!"

You could be forgiven for thinking the video-game world of the late 1980s was obsessed with military games -- it was. With wars and conflicts headlining the nightly newscasts, there was a strong appetite for a little audience participation, and manufacturers were happy to oblige. There were top-down games, light-gun games, side-scrolling shooters, flying games, the vast majority of which involved killing human enemies, causing great concern in parents' groups and contributing to the "arcade hysteria" that infected many cities and towns during this period. Many councils would ban arcades entirely.

OPERATION WOLF

WORLD'S NO.1 ARCADE GAME

ocean

AMIGA 2495

Overall 91%

Presidential 93% Graphics 92% Gameplay 91% Playability 90% Value for money 89% Overall 91%

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Overall 91%

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Hold on to your stomachs, unscrupulous you know for the journey of a lifetime as you take the controls of the most advanced helicopter maneuvers specialists could ever conceive—outmaneuver the latest jet fighter, outrun the most dangerous gorilla, traverse the near-ruined skyline of skyscraper city as you sharpen your skills for the battle ahead. Plunge out to sea for an epic encounter with an immense, heavily armored goliath. Race on to a showdown in the rocky canyon and forested forests, where your flying expertise is tested to the limits as you hone your skills and maneuver your way through this fortified maze.

The theme of blowing crap up extended to original computer games as well, such as Accolade's *Steel Thunder*, a simulation of various American battle tanks including the M60A3, M1A1, M3 and M48A5. You also choose the crew, each of which has their own strengths and weaknesses.

Originally coded in the late 1970s, *Empire* (below) received a facelift with 1988's "Empire: Wargame of the Century." With a new graphical user interface rather than its traditional text output, the updated Risk-inspired game was universally acclaimed.

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

Entertaining The Troops

- Also In This Issue
- Heroes of the Lance
- Manhunter: New York
- Typhoon of Steel
- Decisive Battles of the American Civil War II

EA's Scattered Works I

STEEL THUNDER
AFTERBURNER BY TANK SIMULATION
ACCOLADE

THUNDER BLADE

conversion kit for *Afterburner* machines. The player takes control of the *Thunderblade* helicopter and flies three different missions, each having four sub-missions. The action starts with a heavily scrolling section where the chopper is down, effectively in and out of the screen, as well as being able to move in all four compass directions. Tanks litter the ground, and fire missiles up at the helicopter, and planes also provide extra hassle. At the end of the level, the scene switches to a first person 3D view, with *Thunderblade* flying in *Afterburner* Buildings loom up and are down around.

Activation might have the rights to *Afterburner* but US Gold have *Thunderblade*, the sequel to the thrilling the impact of its predecessor, Sega's helicopter flying game has gathered quite a following.

Two versions are available, a mechanical sit-down version, which spins around when the joystick is moved, and a stand-up version takes the form of a

—crashing into one causes the destruction of the other. Blasted with chopper's bullets and air-to-air missiles. Tanks and planes are again evidence, and ground missiles.

The final section of the first level is an overhead aircraft that is simply beating with guns. These are destroyed before they launch volleys of white noise core is blown up to progress to the second level, not before a high points bonus is given for the number of enemy craft brought down and destroyed.

Near the action shifts to an urban district, with the helicopter flying over a country scene, with the third

and fourth level set over a river, and finally at a refinery.

Like *Activation*, US Gold have had to work hard at this conversion to try and capture what is a very complex arcade game. With three distinct sections to multilevel, it's inevitable that the game comes as a from what we've seen, the game looks quite good — at the expense of speed. Surprisingly, the Spectrum version is very impressive, although it suffers from

monochromatic graphics which makes it difficult to differentiate between your and the enemy's missiles. The ST version is looking good, although it tends to stall, that won't put off *Thunderblade* fanatics, one should 'you choose' Well, we think you should judge for yourselves — or read the reviews next month.

EMPIRE
"Wargame of the Century"

DON'T SAY YOU WEREN'T WARNED.

WARNING: This program is highly addictive! Considerable otherwise productive time may be lost. Interstel assumes no responsibility for lost productivity on the part of players.

Interstel Corporation

Vaguely resembling the plot and setting of the 1983 movie *Blue Thunder*, *Thunder Blade* was a top-down / third-person perspective shooting game where the player uses guns and missiles to destroy various enemies. Like *R-Type* and *After Burner*, *Thunder Blade* was only released on the Sega Master System and not the NES, helping to shield the console from Nintendo's onslaught.

Guerilla War, *Rambo*, *Ikari Warriors*, *Jackal* and many similar games all had a fairly simple formula: a top-down view of a player-controlled soldier, who could fire guns and grenades in the direction of which was frequently controlled by a dial (known as a POT) allowing for independent player movement and weapons fire. Often the player could climb into and control vehicles such as jeeps, tanks, and boats.

Strategic Simulations would get in on the action, marketing its library of war-themed strategy games to a growing army of war-obsessed computer users.

ARCADE ACTION

GUERRILLA WAR

the name of the game

INSPIRED BY THE NAME OF THE GAME

KONAMI HITS ARE HEADING HOME.

With our new software, your favorite arcade games come alive on your home computer.

If you own an IBM, Amiga or Commodore computer—*Konami* and *Deluxe* of *Konami's* most awesome adventures are about to invade your computer. That's right, the makers you're accustomed to in *Ruby*, *TV Attack*, *Contra*, *Judicial* and *Boot Camp*. And now you'll find yourself face to face against unrelenting challenges, with incredible graphics, addictive music, and sound effects that'll blow you away.

Strike out *Konami's* newest action whenever great software is sold. And be prepared for war!

KONAMI

STALLONE

He's back and this time he's taking no prisoners! Colonel Trautman has been captured by the Russians in Afghanistan and he's in the hands of a person capable of freeing him. Negotiate the minefields, explore the Russian camp, lay bombs, traps, avoid detection, free the Colonel and then — move on to the explosive climax! **RAMBO IS BACK!**

RAMBO III

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KORG



Korg's M1 was a 16-voice 8-part sample-based synthesizer that incorporated an in-built MIDI sequencer and a large library of available sounds based on the General MIDI instrument standard. Its realistic sounds stemmed from a combination of digital samples of acoustic instruments combined with traditional electronic filters, envelopes and low-frequency oscillators.

Users could assign multiple voices to different sections of the keyboard, play over rich accompaniment, and assign keys for quick access to program changes during performances, such as reverb, delay and chorus effects.

The M1 had slots for cards that could either add additional sounds or provide for sequence storage; users could also "dump" their sequences to their home computer over MIDI.

"Freeze" cartridges served two popular purposes: first, to allow game players to revert back to a saved position in order to get additional chances at completing games that typically didn't have save functionality, and second, to bypass copy protection checks that typically tended to occur as a game loaded, and would be defeated by a memory image of a program already in progress.

Freeze cartridges worked by suspending the current operation of the computer's CPU and preserving both the CPU's state and the state of the computer's memory (RAM). This data would typically be compressed on-the-fly and stored to diskette or tape (which also made it a common way to get tape copies of programs only available on diskette.)

Once freeze cartridges became popular, game developers began to develop on-going runtime "checks" to try to identify "thawed" copies.

3 SLOT MOTHERBOARD (DATEL)

Ever wished that you could plug more than one thing into your ISA slot? Now you can! With this double-bank DataL you can't the board has three color-coded sockets which can be switched on and off at the flip of a switch. The whole thing is safely housed in a metal case too. As the ad says, "Only \$16.95!"

THINGS THAT PLUG IN THE BACK AND PUT THINGS ON DISK

ACTION REPLAY MK IV (DATEL)

Do you have a game that actually does more than just put back-ups on the disk? Also, does it include any such things as a printer, printer driver, screen saver and a debugger, which uses the superior Warp 25 and other useful tools. The cost of this just free Car.

For those who would like all these functions and also have the ability to back up programs and files saved in machine code, then maybe the MK IV Professional is for you. It has all the features of the standard MK IV, an enhanced monitor, RAM save and other useful tools. The cost of this mega cartridge is \$14.95. A bit more expensive, but some may think it's worth it!

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HOW TO ORDER...

DATEL ELECTRONICS

FREEZE MACHINE

EXPERT CARTRIDGE (TRILOGIC)

Doing like something out of an HG Wells story, TriLogic's product does prove to be a useful device. Not only does it allow you to make disk backups of programs, it also allows you to flip a switch to use a monitor to enter code directly into the program, enabling you to cheat at games! (Don't they say, "TriLogic" also cheats that's right?) The cost of this expert cartridge is \$14.95. A bit more expensive, but some may think it's worth it!

FREEZE MACHINE (EVESHAM MICROS)

1 of the Freeze Frame series, this cartridge contains hardware that doesn't require the cartridge to load and that can be used to load a faster turbo, but needs to be loaded via the cartridge. Some functions include a built-in reset switch and a fast disk transfer. The cartridge is available from a number of stores, with an extra utility disk update priced at \$7.95, allowing you to save even more programs.

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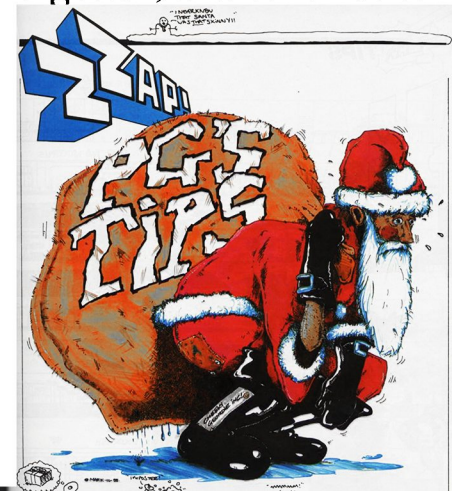
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